1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02)1906 Toda

or of any of his family; sickness or death of a buffalo; failure of milk in a buffalo and persistent kicking of its calf; failure to make a buffalo go to the spot at which it is to be killed during a funeral ceremony; failure of milk to coagulate; burning down of a dairy; disappearance of the bells of a dairy; loss of a *tukitthkars* or lifting stone. In this last instance the stone at the village of Nidrsi was carried away some years ago by a party of English people who came to picnic near the village while the people were away. They carried the stone for some miles and then threw it down. The Nidrsi people could not find it, and consulted Midjkudr and Mongudrvan, who were able to reveal where the stone was to be found, and it was restored to the village, where it can now be seen.

The diviners usually work in pairs, though occasionally it would seem that one only may be consulted. If they are asked for an explanation of some misfortune which has befallen a man, the *teuol* usually find either that the sufferer has committed an offence against the dairy or that he is the subject of spells cast on him by a sorcerer. In the former case, they prescribe the ceremony which must be performed in order to expiate the offence. In the latter case, they name the sorcerer so that the sufferer may know with whom to make his peace.

I have already said that towards the close of my visit a number of misfortunes befell the Todas; one man fell ill, the wife of another died, and the dairy of a third was burnt down, and these events kept the diviners busy, but probably because I was implicated I was not allowed the chance of observing the diviners at work.

The only occasion on which I saw the process of divining was at a funeral. The buffalo which was to be killed had been caught at some distance from the place appointed for its slaughter. The animal was unusually refractory and at length lay down and all the natural efforts of the Todas failed to make it move. Midjkudr and Mongudrvan were then called upon to discover the cause of the obstinacy of the buffalo. Mongudrvan first began to dance slowly to and fro, away from and towards the buffalo. He had

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taken off his cloak and was only wearing the *tadrp*. As I already knew the man, I was able to observe that his general appearance was unaltered and that he did not appear to be in any abnormal mental condition. He was soon joined by Midjkudr, who danced up and down much more wildly (Fig. 36). His general appearance was very different to that usually presented by a Toda man. His hair seemed to stand out from his head, although it shook with each of

FIG. 36.—MIDJKUDR AND MONGUDRVAN DIVINING AT A FUNERAL.

his violent movements; his eyes were abnormally bright and his face gave every appearance of great mental excitement. I had not previously known the man, but when he came to see me a few days later I could hardly believe that the quiet, self-possessed man whom I saw before me was the same individual whom I had seen dancing at the funeral. It was obvious that he had been in a distinctly abnormal condition of frenzy during the divining process. After dancing for a time Midjkudr began to utter broken sentences in a loud and almost chanting voice, while Mon-

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787 Pudrvan remained silent throughout. After Midjkudr had
711 in these sentences given the reason for the obstinacy of
158 the buffalo, and had prescribed what was to be done, he took a red cloth and dancing more violently than ever waved the cloth before the buffalo and pushed against the body of the animal. Then after the people had dragged the buffalo a little way, it rose and went quietly to the place where it was to be killed.

I had much difficulty in finding out exactly what Midjkudr had said. When he came to see me a few days later he stated that he did not know at the time what he was saying, and that his only knowledge was derived from those who had heard him, and I am inclined to believe that he was speaking the truth. His appearance during the divining was remarkably different from that of ordinary days, and strongly suggested a semi-hypnotic state, during which he might well have had no knowledge, or only a very vague knowledge, of anything he said.[1] In his ordinary condition he professed to be ignorant of Malayalam, the language which he was said to use in his frenzied condition.

My ignorance of Malayalam, and the obvious difficulties of the investigation, make me hesitate before expressing any decided opinion as to the real nature of Midjkudr's condition when divining, but I have a very strong leaning towards the idea that the man was in a genuinely abnormal condition, allied to the hypnotic state, and I am disposed to accept the statement of the Todas that he was speaking in a language of which he had only a very vague knowledge when in a normal condition. It is, of course, quite possible that the abnormal appearance of Midjkudr was merely due to the exercise of dancing and to mental excitement, and that he knew perfectly well what he was doing and saying. I can but record my impression that there was something more, and I only commit myself to this extent in regard to the special occasion on which I saw Midjkudr divining; even if I saw a genuine hypnotic or semi-hypnotic phenomenon, it does not follow that all Midjkudr's performances are wholly, or even partly,

[1] For an account of what Midjkudr seems to have said and the consequent proceedings, see p. 392.

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of this nature, and still less does it follow that the performances of all the *teuol* are of this kind. Nothing struck me more than the contrast between the frenzied condition of Midjkudr and the calm, ordinary demeanour of Mongudrvan, his fellow diviner.

In the case I have described the necessity for the intervention of the diviner arose out of the funeral proceedings, but it appears to be not uncommon for divination to be practised during funerals. Both Mr. Walhouse and Mr. Thurston have seen the process of divining going on at funerals. In Mr. Thurston's case he notes that the diviners talked in Malayalam, and offered an explanation of a gigantic figure which had suddenly appeared and as suddenly disappeared some time previously.

Sorcery

I met with greater difficulties in discovering the methods of sorcery than in any other branch of my work. It was quite certain that there were men called *piliutpol* (sorcery praying people), or *pilikòren*, who had the reputation of possessing magical powers, comprised together under the title *piliutvichi* or *pilintiti*. I was able to obtain the names of these people from several sources, but when I approached any one of them on the subject he professed total ignorance and usually suggested that I should apply to some other man, who, he said, was a real *piliutpol*. Occasionally someone would give me a fragment of information, but would impress on me carefully that he had heard it from somebody else and did not know whether it was true or false.

One or two men, who were certainly not sorcerers, told me that they hoped that I should succeed in finding out the methods and would tell them, for they said that the Todas who had no magical powers were always trying to find out the methods of the sorcerers and were never successful.

I was told by two men that they believed that a sorcerer, by merely thinking of the effect he wished to produce, could produce the effect, and that it was not necessary for him to use any magical formula or practise any special rites.

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

648 families among the Mudugas. This has been clearly brought out by
837 Professor C. von Fürer-Haimendorf in a short note published on his
[114] findings in Malabar (see *Man*, Vol. LIV, Feb. 1954, art. 24).

According to what he writes, those village headman at Pottikal who have a traditional friendship with certain Todas receive the latter at least once a year in their homes for several days. Each of them vacates his house completely, leaving, however, his wife to look after the Todas (usually brothers) who then assume the role of "husbands" towards her. In return, when the Muduga headman pays back the visit at the *mad* of his same Toda friends, he has access to their wife and sleeps with her as long as he is staying in the Nilgiris. Neither of the parties
[842] apparently believes that conception can result from such passing intercourse, which perhaps accounts for the tolerance shown by the Todas towards their women's sexual relations with a stranger. I feel sure, however, that it would be impossible to discover anything about this practice from the Nilgiri tribe itself, and it is certainly due to the fact that Professor von Fürer-Haimendorf was working among the Mudugas and not among the Todas that he was able to hear of its existence at all.

838 I enquired repeatedly about homosexuality during my two visits to the Todas, and kept my eyes open for any evidence of it. My questions on this subject seemed to provoke merriment, and the men would usually laugh when interrogated about it. As far as I could make out, there does not seem to be much proclivity towards it, either among men or women. While with the latter I could record no case at all, even from hearsay, with the other sex at least there seemed to be some reason to believe that Tilipa (12) of the Karsh *modol* was inclined that way. A pleasant old man, with long curls and an effeminate manner,
[684 he was reputed to have been caught a number of times with men
623] younger than himself, to the intense amusement of the tribe, and to have been fined by the *noim* for this misdemeanour. He was married to a masterful, virilóid woman, who bossed him about in no uncertain manner, and from whom he had "had" four fine sons. It was whispered, however, that he was only the legal father, having given the bow and arrow for them, while another was their physiological sire.

●158 Neurosis was a question very difficult to go into, working as I was
828 through an interpreter, and having no means by which to delve very deeply into the individual psyche. Here too, appearances seem to show that there was little of it about, the complex social organisation of the tribe affording plenty of outlets for the feelings, emotions and drives of ill-adapted persons. Pangur, son of Piliar (52), however, was a case

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in point, the only one I really came across. A man in his thirties, he was reputed to be a wanderer, travelling incessantly over the Nilgiri downs without any home at which to stay. He was not known to have any attachments at all, let alone feminine ones, and the explanation for this which I obtained from Kanvarsathi was illuminating. Pangur was supposed to have been excessively repressed in childhood, so that he had never got over the habit of masturbation. Again, I was struck by the very orthodox psychoanalytical nature of this interpretation coming from a people who have no notions of the modern development of psychology in the West. It was as if their lack of prudery in sexual matters coupled with a primitive commonsense were sufficient to make them understand these things much better than anyone in our societies would.

Both the Todas and the local Indian medical practitioners whom I interrogated on this question, said that they had never heard of or seen any case of insanity in the tribe. And this in spite of syphilis being (or having been until lately) rampant among them, although, it seems obvious, only in a mild form which does not bring about nervous disorders such as with us.

Suicide, on the other hand, was far from unknown, and numerous instances could be cited. Formerly, the recognized method of doing away with oneself was, as Rivers has recorded it (see *The Todas*, p. 555): hanging with a *kakhudri* (Dregea volubilis, Benth) creeper. This because Erten, described as the servant of the man-god Kwotèn, is said to have killed himself in this way, after his master had been carried away by the goddess Terkosh (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 201). Nowadays, however, opium has taken the place of this more antiquated method, a habit which, it is considered, has been adopted from the Badagas. Sriar's father, Izcheidi (20), thus committed suicide by taking the drug, because his wife had been carried away from him. because Erten, described as the servant of the man-god Kwotèn, is said have ended her life by taking opium after the death of her son.

Concerning crime, Rivers says: "It is, however, doubtful whether crime can be said to exist among the Todas," (*The Todas*, pp. 553–4). Certainly the tribe appears to be made up of remarkably meek and peaceful individuals, they having no arms at all, a rare occurrence among any human beings on earth. Nor is there any indication that they ever had any. From questioning I gathered that Todas often quarrel, shouting and even beating each other with the very attractive walking-sticks which it is their speciality to manufacture. But nothing